

Mercury Checklist for Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities

From a checklist developed by Healthcare without Harm: www.h2e-online.org/pubs/selfasmt.pdf

Mercury can be found in all health care settings, including hospitals, medical offices, dental offices, veterinary clinics, “nurse’s offices” in schools and businesses, and home health care practitioner’s equipment. Many mercury-added and –containing devices and chemicals have available substitutes which have no or significantly less mercury, or are less likely to release mercury into the environment. These substitutions should be made to the greatest extent possible.

If items containing mercury cannot be removed because no feasible substitute is available, they should be identified and labeled, and plans should be in place to reduce the hazard of release while the item is in use, and to ensure proper recycling or disposal when you are finished with it.

Priority Sources

Ck	Item
	Temperature sensors, including fever thermometers, laboratory thermometers, cooking thermometers, equipment thermometers (e.g., food trays), and thermostats
	sphygmomanometers (for blood pressure), weather barometers and other pressure sensors, such as vacuum gauges on medical equipment
	Weighted medical tubing, including esophageal dilators, cantor tubes, miller-abbot tubes and weighted feeding tubes
	Mercury-containing reagents and solutions (see list below)
	Sodium hypochlorite (bleach) and other bulk cleaners which may be contaminated with mercury (this may require a laboratory analysis of a batch from your supplier).
	Bulk mercury for any current or former equipment, usually packaged in glass jars
	Fluorescent and mercury-vapor light bulbs
	New and existing dental amalgams

Additional sources you may encounter and other details:

1. Mercury-containing facilities equipment
 - Mercury oxide/zinc batteries
 - Other batteries, including many in cell phones, cordless phones and other rechargeable equipment
 - Gauges with liquid mercury may be found on boilers and other large equipment. These may have large reservoirs of the liquid metal totally several pounds
 - Displacement plunger relays
 - Flame sensors or safety valve thermostat probes (may occur in kitchen equipment as well
 - Fleet vehicles may contain ABS, convenience and trunk lighting switches and HID headlamps
 - Old pesticides, fungicides, herbicides and paints
 - Computer monitors and other electronics
2. Laboratory chemicals to look for
 - Acetate
 - Alum hematoxin
 - B 5 fixative
 - Bleach *
 - Cajal’s stain

- Camco
- Carbol-Gentian violet stain
- Carnoy-Lebrun
- Cesium Internal Standard
- Channing's solution
- Formol-Zenker's stain
- Golgi's stain
- Gormori's reagent
- Gram iodine stain
- Helly
- Hematoxylin (solution A)
- Histological fixatives
- Immu-Sal
- Mercurochrome
- Mercury (II) chloride
- Mercury (II) oxide
- Mercury iodide
- Mercury nitrate
- Millon's reagent
- Mucolexx
- Nessler's solution
- Ohlamacher
- Phenolic mercuric
- Phenylmercuric Acetate
- Shardin
- Stabilur Tablets
- Takata's reagent
- Thimerosol
- Zenker's solution
- Other test kits with a mercury reagent

Additional Notes and References:

- For more information on dental mercury: <http://www.mass.gov/dep/erp/dentists/dentalhg.htm>. Unused and spent amalgam materials can be captured and recycled.
- Fluorescent light bulbs are often an environmentally responsible choice. Even though they contain mercury, they use significantly less electricity for the same amount of light and last much longer than conventional incandescent bulbs. Electricity generation can also release mercury into the environment. It is important that fluorescent bulbs are properly handled during and after use. The bulbs can be easily recycled. See: <http://www.mass.gov/dep/files/flampbiz.htm> for information on handling and recycling of bulbs. State contracts with mercury lamp recyclers are available; see FAC 26 on <http://www.comm-pass.com/>.
- The state's Operational Services Division (OSD) also has a program for Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP), at <http://www.mass.gov/epp/enviro.htm>. Here, you can find information on purchasing equipment and supplies with reduced or no mercury added.
- Mercury-free bleaches and other cleaners are available.

Mercury Policies and Procedures at Your Facility:

The following list, adapted from the Ohio EPA *Mercury Challenge Handbook* (for medical facilities), can be used to evaluate and improve your mercury reduction efforts.

Does your facility--

1. Have a policy regarding the purchase of mercury-containing equipment and products?
2. Track or have an inventory form for mercury containing equipment and products?
3. Have a policy on how to clean up a mercury spill?
4. Train staff in preventing and cleaning up mercury spills?
5. Have procedures for cleaning and refilling instruments containing mercury?
6. Label equipment that contains mercury?
7. Recycle mercury parts when you replace old equipment? (e.g., switches)
8. Require the manufacturer or vendor to disclose mercury content or concentration?
9. Have a policy to ensure mercury products are not disposed of down the drain or in the garbage?
10. Clean mercury out of traps, sumps and sewer lines?
11. Recycle spent fluorescent lamps and other lamps that contain mercury?
12. Recycle batteries containing mercury?